AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1 and 3-11 without prejudice to their future filing in continuation or divisional applications. Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Cancelled)

2. (Currently amended) A nucleic acid molecule with endonuclease activity having the formula II:

$$3' \text{——} X \text{——} \ Z \ \text{——} \ Y \text{——} \ 5'$$

wherein, ~~N represents a nucleotide or a non-nucleotide linker;~~ X and Y are independently oligonucleotides of length sufficient to stably interact with a target nucleic acid molecule; Z is an oligonucleotide having a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of 5'-AGAUAACGUGAAGAU-3' (SEQ ID NO 97) and 5'-AAUGGCCUAUCGGUGCGA-3' (SEQ ID NO 98); _____ represents a chemical linkage; and C, G, A, and U represent cytidine, guanosine, adenosine and uridine nucleotides, respectively.

Claims 3-11 (Cancelled)

12. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein said chemical linkage is independently or in combination selected from the group consisting of phosphate ester , amide , phosphorothioate, phosphorodithioate, arabino, and arabinofluoro linkages.

13. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein said nucleic acid molecule is chemically synthesized.

14. (Currently amended The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein said nucleic acid molecule comprises at least one sugar modification.

15. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein said nucleic acid molecule comprises at least one nucleic acid base modification.

16. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein said nucleic acid molecule comprises at least one phosphate backbone modification.

17. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 14, wherein said sugar modification is selected from the group consisting of 2'-H, 2'-*O*-methyl, 2'-*O*-allyl, 2'-*C*-allyl, 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro, and 2'-deoxy-2'-amino modifications.

18. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 16, wherein said phosphate backbone modification is selected from the group consisting of phosphorothioate, phosphorodithioate, and amide modifications.

19. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein said nucleic acid molecule comprises a 5'-cap, a 3'-cap, or both a 5'-cap and a 3'-cap.

20. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 19, wherein said 5'-cap is a phosphorothioate modification of at least one 5'-terminal nucleotide in said nucleic acid molecule.

21. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 19, wherein said 5'-cap is a phosphorothioate modification of at least two 5'-terminal nucleotides in said nucleic acid molecule.

22. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 19, wherein said 5'-cap is a phosphorothioate modification of at least three 5'-terminal nucleotides in said nucleic acid molecule.

23. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 19, wherein said 5'-cap is a phosphorothioate modification of at least four 5'-terminal nucleotides in said nucleic acid molecule.

24. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 19, wherein said 3'-cap is a 3'-3' inverted riboabasic moiety.

25. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 19, wherein said 3'-cap is a 3'-3' inverted deoxyriboabasic moiety.

26. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein said nucleic acid cleaves a separate nucleic acid molecule.

27. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 26, wherein said separate nucleic acid molecule is RNA.

28. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 26, wherein said nucleic acid comprises between 12 and 100 bases complementary to said separate nucleic acid molecule.

29. (Original) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 26, wherein said nucleic acid comprises between 14 and 24 bases complementary to said separate nucleic acid molecule.

30. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~any of~~ claim~~s 1 and~~ 2, wherein said X and Y are independently of length selected from the group consisting of 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 20 nucleotides.

31. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein the length of X is equal to the length of Y.

32. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, wherein the length of X is not equal to the length of Y.

33. (Currently amended) An isolated cell including the nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2.

34. (Currently amended) The isolated cell of claim 33, wherein said cell is a mammalian cell.

35. (Currently amended) The isolated cell of claim 34, wherein said cell is a human cell.

36. (Currently amended) An expression vector comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding at least one of the nucleic acid molecules of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2, in a manner which allows expression of the nucleic acid molecule.

37. (Currently amended) An isolated cell including the expression vector of claim 36.

38. (Currently amended) The isolated cell of claim 37, wherein said cell is a mammalian cell.

39. (Currently amended) The isolated cell of claim 38, wherein said cell is a human cell.

40. (Currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1 or~~ claim 2.

Clams 41-45 (Withdrawn)

46. (Original) The expression vector of claim 36, wherein said vector comprises:

a transcription initiation region;

a transcription termination region;

a nucleic acid sequence encoding at least one nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or claim 2; and

wherein said nucleic acid sequence is operably linked to said initiation region and said termination region, in a manner which allows expression and/or delivery of said nucleic acid molecule.

47. (Original) The expression vector of claim 36, wherein said vector comprises:

a transcription initiation region;

a transcription termination region;

an open reading frame;

a nucleic acid sequence encoding at least one nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said sequence is operably linked to the 3'-end of said open reading frame; and

wherein said nucleic acid sequence is operably linked to said initiation region, said open reading frame and said termination region, in a manner which allows expression and/or delivery of said nucleic acid molecule.

48. (Original) The expression vector of claim 36, wherein said vector comprises:

a transcription initiation region;

a transcription termination region;

an intron;

a nucleic acid sequence encoding at least one nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or claim 2; and

wherein said nucleic acid sequence is operably linked to said initiation region, said intron and said termination region, in a manner which allows expression and/or delivery of said nucleic acid molecule.

49. (Original) The expression vector of claim 36, wherein said vector comprises:

a transcription initiation region;

a transcription termination region;

an intron;

an open reading frame;

a nucleic acid sequence encoding at least one nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said sequence is operably linked to the 3'-end of said open reading frame; and

wherein said nucleic acid sequence is operably linked to said initiation region, said intron, said open reading frame and said termination region, in a manner which allows expression and/or delivery of said nucleic acid molecule.